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FOR WHA/AND, G FOR LAURA LEDERER, DRL FOR LISTON, SCHNEIDER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/28/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PHUM](#) [PE](#)

SUBJECT: VIEWS FROM THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL: CHRISTIAN
EVANGELICAL NATIONAL RESTORATION PARTY GAINING STRENGTH

REF: A. LIMA 1197
[1B.](#) 05 LIMA 4197
[1C.](#) 05 LIMA 3415
[1D.](#) 05 LIMA 3414

Classified By: Political Counselor Alexander Margulies. Reason: 1.4(d)
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SUMMARY

[11.](#) (C) Humberto Lay Sun, presidential candidate for the Christian evangelical National Restoration (RN) party, told Poloff 3/27 that his campaign is generating increased momentum (the most recent Apoyo poll has Lay's support doubling to two percent while his party could meet the minimum threshold for placing candidates in Congress). Lay acknowledged that he has little chance of winning the presidency, but he does think it possible to take 5-10 percent of the vote and influence his followers' votes in a second-round run-off. He added that representatives from the Unidad Nacional and APRA campaigns have contacted him in this regard. Lay said that in a runoff between ultra-nationalist "outsider" Union por el Peru (UPP) candidate Ollanta Humala and Unidad Nacional's Lourdes Flores, he would help the latter by working quietly through Church networks. END SUMMARY.

[12.](#) (U) Humberto Lay Sun is a Christian evangelical pastor, former Truth and Reconciliation Commission Member, and presidential candidate for the National Restoration (RN) party.

A CAMPAIGN COMES TO LIFE

[13.](#) (U) Lay said that his campaign had been moribund, plagued by abysmal poll numbers and splits among the Evangelicals, until February 5, when his supporters held a meeting at the Campo de Marte in Lima attended by 50,000 of the faithful. This gathering boosted the enthusiasm of RN officials and potential voters, showing them that his candidacy was viable. Since then, Lay has put to rest divisions with other evangelicals, including one-time pastor and former presidential candidate Peter Horner (Refs A-C). Lay maintains that his campaign is now taking off.

14. (U) The latest Apoyo poll (Ref A) shows that support for Lay's candidacy has doubled to two percent, while his party's congressional slate is at three percent and stands a good chance of making the four percent threshold for placing candidates in Congress. Lay said that polling experts from the Datum consultancy and the Catholic University have told him that his real support, which he claims is minimized by the pollsters who favor the major candidates, runs between 5-10 percent. Lay cited a poll done by the evangelicals that found that over 80 percent of the evangelicals in Lima intended to vote for him. This would translate into 9.6 percent of the Lima vote and likely just over 5 percent nationwide. Lay conceded that this last survey was unscientific, but remained convinced that the evangelical vote would have significant impact.

RIVALS TAKE NOTICE

15. (C) Lay stated that he had recently received calls from both Unidad Nacional congressional candidate Guido Lombardi and Alan Garrido, a top advisor to APRA presidential candidate Alan Garcia. Lombardi reportedly asked Lay to quit the race and, failing that, to attack Humala. Garrido, Lay said, claimed that APRA was ready to "co-govern" with him in return for the evangelicals' support. Lay thought that he is being courted because his base of support is among Peru's poorest social sectors, groups C-E, which is also the power base of Ollanta Humala. He added that RN's message resembles Humala's in that it promises radical change, albeit of a non-violent variety.

16. (U) Lay described a long list of regional meetings that he has held across Peru, some of them in Humala's own base area (Abancay in Apurimac) that were attended by crowds that ranged from 1,000-3,000, including 3,000 in Pucallpa and 2,500 in Tingo Maria. He claims to have consistently out-drawn fourth place Centrist Front candidate (and former Interim President) Valentin Paniagua in rural meetings when both have been scheduled close to one another. Financing, he complained, is the main obstacle his campaign faces. Consequently, RN cannot afford television time and has to depend on church networks to get the word out about Lay's candidacy. Even so, Lay maintained, his message is spreading, particularly in the countryside and in the poor suburbs around Lima, passed on from one believer to another through church networks. Lay said he will hold another large gathering on Thursday, March 30, at the Campo de Marte field in central Lima. He predicted that he will once again draw 50,000 people. (NOTE: Poloff will attend this meeting. END NOTE.)

17. (C) Lay stated that he still hopes to qualify for the second-round as the come-from-behind candidate, maintaining that anything can happen in the remaining two weeks of the campaign. Nonetheless, he conceded that such a result is not likely. When questioned about whom he would support if Humala and Flores faced each other in a run-off, Lay stated unhesitatingly that he would back Flores as, "the lesser of two evils." He added that he would not/not endorse her publicly, but that he and other evangelical leaders would communicate their position through church networks. For the evangelicals, Lay explained, Humala represents violence, favors coca cultivation, and dislikes the United States, all positions they find abhorrent. Lay also stated that he hopes RN could win a sufficiently large legislative bloc to hold the balance of power in the next Congress.

COMMENT

18. (C) While Lay and his National Restoration party are unlikely to poll more than single digits in either the presidential or legislative races, they could indeed have an important say over who wins the presidency as well as exert

an influence beyond the size of their numbers in the next Congress. The organizational capacity of the evangelicals and their roots among both the poor and rural folk could well prove crucial to a second-round candidate who faces off against Ollanta Humala. Peru's Evangelicals have made themselves felt before, helping to elect President Fujimori in 1990, and could well have a disproportionate affect in [¶2006](#). END COMMENT.
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